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The Gender of varietal Names.—In answer to the editor of the *Gardeners' Chronicle*, who asked Mr. DeCandolle's opinion as to whether the name of a variety should conform in gender to the generic name when the abbreviation "var." follows the specific, the distinguished codifier of botanical nomenclature answers as follows:

"I have sometimes put to myself the same question as to the gender of the names of varieties, and it is most likely that in practice I have resolved it sometimes in one way and sometimes in another, but I have just been looking to the practice of authors of repute, and I observe that, in general, they have made the varietal name conform to the gender of the generic name, thus:

"*Nasturtium amphibium*, α indivisum, DC., *Syst.*, ii., p. 117.

"*Thymus Serpyllum*, β montanus, Benth., in *Prodr.*, xii.

"*Phyllanthus simplex*, β oblongifolius, Müller, in *Prodr.*, xv., &c.

If the word '*varietas*,' or the abbreviation 'var.' be employed, it seems most correct to make the adjective feminine. The use of Greek letters to indicate varieties, thus: α , β , γ , corresponds to the employment of figures, which have no gender. On the other hand, when the idea is expressed by a qualifying 'var.' or '*varietas*,' a sentence is made which must be constructed in the correct grammatical manner. The name of the variety becomes in this case an adjective qualifying '*varietas*,' and should therefore take a feminine termination. English writers generally use the abbreviation 'var.' Linnaeus indicated the varieties by the Greek letters, α , β , γ , without, as a rule, adding any other epithet. Continental authors have mainly confirmed to Linnean usage, and do not write 'var.' This is in conformity with the omission of 'gen.' before the generic, or 'sp.' before the specific name."

Relation of Medullary Rays to the Strength of Timber.—At a January meeting of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences Dr. Rothrock called attention to some experiments made by Mr. Frank Day, in the laboratory of the University of Pennsylvania, on the relation of the medullary ray to the strength of timber. Mr. Day had found that it required just about twice as much force (say 1,130 pounds) to pull apart a square inch of live oak, if the force ran parallel with these rays, as it would if the force were applied at right-angles to them.

What was true of the live oak was also largely true of other timbers. The buttonwood (*Platanus occidentalis*) was remarkable for the development of its medullary rays, and also for the difficulty of splitting the wood at right-angles to them.

Mr. Day's experiments also proved that there existed great differences in the quality of the material of the woody fibre; for in timber where the relative proportion of wood and ducts could well be compared, and where the fibres were of equal size throughout, differences in strength were to be found.

Botanists of short stature will be interested in a statement made in the April *Naturalist* "that no obituary notices of scientific men of a length of a page or less have ever been declined by its editors."

The Syracuse Botanical Club.—During the past year the Syracuse Botanical Club has added over one hundred and fifty mounted

specimens to its Onondaga herbarium, which now contains nine hundred and forty species and varieties of phænogams and acrogens, besides seventy-six mosses. The order best represented in this collection is Compositæ, of which there are a hundred and seven species.

The Club has held fortnightly meetings through the winter for botanical readings and hopes soon to resume its field work.

At its annual meeting, March 15th, the following officers were elected for the current year: President, Mrs. Clark W. Barnes; Vice-President, Mrs. Leonora Goodrich; Corresponding Secretary, Mrs. George Hosmer; Recording Secretary, Miss C. A. Bach; Treasurer, Miss Katie Poole.

MARY OLIVIA RUST.

Proceedings of the Torrey Botanical Club.—At the regular meeting of the Club held at Columbia College, Tuesday evening, Feb. 12th, the President occupied the chair and twenty-five persons were present.

The following Committees were appointed for the current year:

Finance Committee.—Addison Brown and J. L. Wall.

Committee on Admissions.—W. R. Gerard and Benj. Braman.

Herbarium and Library Committee.—N. L. Britton, Miss E. G. Knight, A. Hollick and J. S. Brown.

Dr. Newberry continued his account of the vegetation along the line of the Northern Pacific Railroad, describing more particularly on this occasion the shrubs and herbaceous plants.

One person was elected an active member.

At the regular meeting of the Club held at Columbia College Tuesday evening, March 11th, the President occupied the chair and twenty-six persons were present. Messrs. Rudkin, Day and Hollick were appointed a committee on field meetings for the present year.

Dr. N. L. Britton remarked upon a collection of ferns made in recent years by Mr. S. B. Buckley in Texas and Mexico. It included the following species:

Polypodium incanum, Swartz, a small form from rocks in the mountains of Pecos Co., Texas; *Gymnogramme hispida*, Mett., Lampezas Mountains, Mexico; *Notholæna sinuata*, Kaulf., Pecos Co., Texas; *N. ferruginea*, Desv., Lampezas Mts., Mexico; *N. candida*, Hook., Pecos Co.; *N. Hookeri*, DC., Pecos Co.; *N. Fendleri*, Kunze, Pecos Co.; *N. dealbata*, Kunze, Austin, Texas; *Cheilanthes Alabamensis*, Kunze, Austin; *C. microphylla*, Swartz, Austin; *C. leucopoda*, Presl, Lampezas Mts., Mexico; *C. Eatoni*, Baker, Pecos Co., Texas; *C. Lindheimeri*, Hook., Lampezas Mts.; *Pellæa atropurpurea*, Link, *P. ternifolia*, Link, Pecos Co.; *P. Wrightiana*, Hook., Pecos Co.; *Asplenium parvulum*, Mart. and Gal., Austin; *Aspidium patens*, Swartz, Austin; *Lygodium Mexicanum*, Presl, on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande, near Brownsville, Texas.

Dr. Newberry remarked upon the flora of the Cascade Mountains in Oregon, and read extracts from his journal of the expedition to that region in 1855.

ERRATUM.—Page 31 (March number) second line from bottom, read "axis" for "axils."